



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Salem Azzam
Secretary General
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Dear Mr Azzam,

Thank you for your recent letter.

I am grateful to you for writing on the terrible crisis in what was Yugoslavia. The people in that community have not been well served by the leaders in Europe. This Government's lack of response to their call for help has resulted in a far worse tragedy with over two million refugees having fled in fear of their lives.

I and my colleagues, have continually pressed the Government to take steps that could, and should have been taken by the international community to reduce the ferocity of the fighting, and increase the aid to the victims.

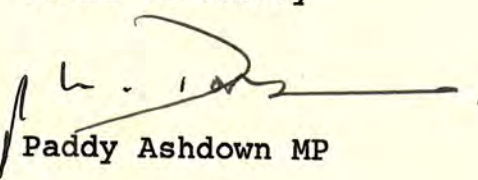
I have, on numerous occasions, written to John Major on this matter, using Britain's EC Presidency and, as a member of the Security Council to set up a co-ordinated European plan for refugees, and to use NATO's air power to enforce the air exclusion zone. I have urged him to take action to ensure essential aid reaches the people of Sarajevo.

Britain has also been incredibly slow in agreeing to accept Muslim prisoners freed from Serb-controlled camps. Furthermore Kenneth Clarke's introduction of the visa requirement for former Yugoslavs seems to be quite ruthless in its response to these people who are suffering daily persecution.

I fear that, in the months ahead, we will witness some of the most horrifying scenes of death from starvation and cold in Bosnia simply because the Government, once again, offered "too little, too late."

That is why I am shortly making a further trip to Bosnia.

Yours sincerely


Paddy Ashdown MP



7 December 1992

Mr Paddy Ashdown MP
House of Commons

Dear Mr Ashdown,

I should like you to know how much the stand you have taken on the situation in Bosnia is appreciated by Muslims in the United Kingdom and indeed throughout the world.

Muslims everywhere are tortured by the suffering being inflicted on their brothers and sisters in Bosnia and are distraught that the powerful nations which have the means are doing nothing to stop the Serbian aggression. The danger that the conflict will almost inevitably spread to other parts of the former Yugoslavia increases their fears and it is pressure from the ordinary man in the street, who truly cares about his brethren, that has led to the Muslim governments's recent declaration that they will send arms to Bosnia if the situation continues as at present and the Bosnians are left defenceless against the Serbs.

As you yourself recognise, the provision of humanitarian aid is simply not enough and we urge you to continue your brave efforts to influence policy in a way that will bring relief to the suffering of many innocent men, women and children.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Salem Azzam

Salem Azzam
Secretary General